



## Security Council Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, 14 July 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Adam Kuymizakis,  
Chargé d'affaires, Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations,  
New York

---

President

I begin by thanking the United Kingdom for convening today's open debate. We also thank Special Representative Pramila Patten and the briefers, Ms. Naw Hser Hser and Ms. Nadine, for their courageous calls to action and clear recommendations.

As a tactic of war, torture, and terrorism, sexual violence shatters the lives of survivors, their families, and communities. In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, armed groups use sexual violence to control territory and natural resources, as attacks in and around internally displaced persons camps escalate. In Ukraine, large-scale displacement has increased trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. In Haiti, gangs regularly kidnap women and girls, while arbitrary arrests in Myanmar have separated children from their parents, increasing their risk of forced marriage and human trafficking. Verified incidents in South Sudan doubled in 2022.

Conflict related sexual violence is often directed at human rights defenders, while in Colombia, illegal armed groups enforce patriarchal social norms through violence, by targeting LGBTQI persons.



States have an obligation to ensure a safe enabling environment for civil society and to protect women active in public life from reprisals. We are deeply concerned that the Taliban's relentless and systematic gender persecution in Afghanistan has created an environment of pervasive impunity.

The glaring gap between the Security Council's standards and commitments to prevent and respond to conflict related sexual violence, and the horrifying reality for victims and survivors, must be closed. In this respect, we would like to highlight three priorities.

First, preventing conflict related sexual violence and improving protection requires survivor-centered approaches that ensure access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and strengthen the capacity of women and survivor-led organisations. This is especially crucial when health services are attacked, as reported in Sudan, where women and girls on the move are being terrorised by sexual and gender-based violence. It requires effective partnerships and trust between local communities and the UN.

It also requires the deployment of women's protection advisers to all relevant situations of concern. Furthermore, gender must be incorporated systematically into risk assessments, monitoring and reporting, operational and tactical planning, budgets, and concepts of operation.

Second, by stopping the illicit transfer and trade of weapons and ammunition to non-state actors, mercenary groups, and individuals, we can counteract



the growing links between militarisation and sexual violence and exploitation.

Third, the Security Council can more proactively use targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate and direct sexual violence in conflict. We fully support the SRSG's recommendation that the Council ensures conflict related sexual violence is monitored systematically. We firmly believe that targeted sanctions can be used effectively to deter the commission of violence by all parties, including mercenaries and private military and security companies.

More than 70 per cent of the parties listed in the SRSG's report are persistent perpetrators. These verified cases should be aligned with the work of sanctions committees and their Panels of Experts, who should have access to this data and expertise on conflict related sexual violence. Briefings by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to Sanctions Committees can greatly facilitate this important work.

President

All member states have a role to play in strengthening accountability and fostering a gender-responsive security sector. This cannot be done without responding to structural gender inequality and harmful social norms. As a shared commitment holder on Women, Peace, and Security, Malta reaffirms its commitment to advancing these priorities.

I thank you.